Mr. James Mason
Carroll & Graf
260 Fifth Ave.,
New York, N.Y. 10001

6/5/89

Dear Mr. Mason,

When you phoned from Washington you said I am uncomfortable reading Jim Marrs' book. I'm not. Most of what I read on the subject is of the same nature and I'm used to it as I am to the dross that appears on TV and in the books I help. I fear you are, however, uncomfortable about what I wrote.

Well, I suppose that in a sense I was what you might call uncomfortable about being offered $500 for what you asked of me. But not about anything else.

I did, as I said I would, scan some of the manuscript and I made some notes that I've discarded. I made no copies of any of the pages.

I started to tell you about something that I think will, with any attention, lead to severe criticism of the book. It is also grossly inaccurate and displays a monumental ignorance of fact that is beyond question. Toward the end of the conclusions Marr says that Lyndon Johnson's first act as President was to order the removal of JFK's body from Parkland Hospital. Johnson was not even consulted on the removal of the body. It was done by the Secret Service, on its own. And when that happened Johnson was not yet President. The body was on the plane and Johnson was awaiting the arrival of Judge Sarah Hughes to swear him in and Johnson was not yet President.

At almost the same place he refers to Hoover's alleged "close contact" with his friend Johnson. There was virtually no direct contact between them when LBJ was President. The contact was indirect, usually between Cartha DeLoach at the FBI and Marvin Watson at the White House.

Of the other things I noted I'll add this one because it may interfere with sales. Whether genuinely or as a device, Marrs begins by telling his readers not to believe any book on the subject. There are books that are factually correct. Only they are not books of conspiracy theorizing. And those who loves their theories and those they read about them may be turned off. One of the best potential markets is among conspiracy theorizers and those addicted to them. Do you want to antagonize a potential market?

The ms. also needs a closer reading. Dr. Humes was not "the autopsy." He was the chief autopsy prosector. I also noticed "dairy" for "diary."

I suppose I ought also tell you that President Johnson did not order the evidence locked up for another 50 years. He issued no such order and the fact that I have a third of a million pages of it should suggest that it wasn't and isn't locked up. And this did not just "leak" out as he says. It was in response to FOIA litigation.

I'd intended writing you based on the notes I made and then doing no more other than suggesting that if you find something serious that troubles you to just phone me but unless you are troubled by what may appear to be libelous, I'd rather you didn't.

It may amuse you to know that when LBJ had an assassinated-related favor to ask of J. Edgar Hoover he used Abe Fortas as an emissary. And the then Justice did not even try to see Hoover about it.

I return the ms. herewith.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

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